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1ST DISTRICT, VIRGINIA

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

November 21, 2017

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The Honorable Ajit Pai
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12 St. SW.
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Mr. Pai:

I write to bring to your attention concerns I have received from wireless internet service providers (WISPs) in my district regarding two notices of proposed rulemaking (NPRM), *Promoting Investment in the 3550-3700 MHz band* and *Expanding Flexible Use in Mid-Band Spectrum Between 3.7 and 24 GHz*.

During your participation at the Virginia's First District Broadband Task Force Summit, involving federal, state and local stakeholders, we discussed obstacles and solutions to providing broadband access to rural Virginians. Among the issues discussed were improving Form 477 mapping, prescriptive easements, dig once policies, strengthening private-public partnerships, and expanding the E-rate program.

However, one of the more prominent topics was the series of proposed rules by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to auction off mid-band spectrum of 3650 MHz. WISPs in my district, Virginia Broadband and Northern Neck Wireless, discussed their investments in the 3650 MHz band and its value in providing high speed internet to rural Virginia.

The companies expressed concern with auctioning off spectrum band 3650 MHz and its effects on smaller providers. More specifically, proposals to extend Priority Access License (PAL) terms to 10 years and expanding coverage areas from individual census tracts to Partial Economic Areas (PEAs). They are worried that such proposals could potentially price out smaller WISPs and preclude their involvement in a future auction. The Wireless Internet Service Providers Association, the national organization representing WISPs filed similar comments to the FCC on October 19, 2017.

As you move forward with these NPRMs, I respectfully request that you consider the concerns of WISPs and their contributions in providing "last mile" service and the significant impacts upon the hundreds of thousands of rural citizens.

I am deeply grateful for your visit to Virginia's First Congressional District and for the FCC's efforts of bridging the digital divide between and urban and rural America. I look forward to working with you to bring expanded access and increased speeds of broadband for the unserved and underserved regions of this great country.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Bob Wittman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Bob" and last name "Wittman" clearly distinguishable.

Robert J. Wittman
Member of Congress



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

March 14, 2018

The Honorable Robert J. Wittman
U.S. House of Representatives
2055 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Wittman:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's review of mid-band spectrum in the 3550-3700 MHz band (3.5 GHz band) and the 3700-4200 MHz band (3.7 GHz band). I share your concern of promoting continued investment in the band by a variety of stakeholders, including by wireless Internet service providers, that serve the needs of rural communities.

During my participation in Virginia's First District's Rural Broadband Task Force Summit with you in October, I was encouraged by the insightful dialogue among stakeholders on obstacles and solutions to providing broadband access to rural Virginians—including the need for more commercial, terrestrial access to mid-band spectrum. To that end, I thank you for the invitation to participate in the event.

Commissioner O'Rielly has been heading up the Commission's efforts to review the 3.5 GHz band, including through the issuance of a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to consider certain adjustments to existing rules. I look forward to sharing your concerns with him as we work to reexamine the existing rules, including rules to expand access to licensed spectrum in the 3.5 GHz band.

Regarding the 3.7 GHz band, the Commission issued a Notice of Inquiry last summer on how that band (among others) could be put to its best use. I intend to propose the next steps needed to make that band available for commercial, terrestrial use in the coming months.

I appreciate your interest in bringing broadband to unserved and underserved communities. Your views will be entered into the record of the current 3.5 GHz rulemaking proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

Ajit V. Pai
Ajit V. Pai

*P.S. Congressman, thanks again
for hosting me in the district.
I look forward to working with
you to get the 1st bully connected!*